



EXHIBIT 9
DATE 11/19/2011
HB

Chairman Hollandsworth and Members of the Committee:

My name is Butch Weedon and I have had the honor of leading the effort to keep Montana's firefighters safe and competent for the past twenty nine years.

The Fire Services Training School like Extension, provides outreach educational services statewide. Unlike Extension, we have a very narrowly defined set of students consisting of 11,000 members of local fire companies, 96% of which are volunteers. Our mission is to build the capacity of these fire companies to protect their communities during emergencies. Our goal is to reach 80% of fire services with meaningful training four times per year.

All of Montana is our campus. Our staff is a small group of very experienced fire service fanatics who work long hours, drive thousands of miles, and provide some of the best fire service training available anywhere. They try to match the commitment made by our firefighters! These trainers play a vital role in the protection of the people, their property and our environment. The skills they teach are not conducive to being taught via "distance learning" technologies. They trained 6600 firefighters in 2010 (up 56% from 2008) and provided training in 51 Counties.

The work they accomplish results in lives saved, hundreds of thousands saved in insurance premiums, and a reduction in the states tab for "project fires" which you, our Legislature, is expected to pickup annually. A couple years ago we trained the Red Lodge fire company officers. The training consisted of simulations involving a variety of incidents, including a wildfire threatening homes. On November 21st the wind was blowing 60 MPH and the "Turkey Fire" took off just outside Red Lodge. More than 30 engines were working the fire within the first hour. Thirty homes were in the flame path and all survived the fire, thanks to the efforts of

Fire Services Training School

Montana State University,
U.S. Department of
Agriculture and Montana
Counties Cooperating.
MSU Extension is an equal
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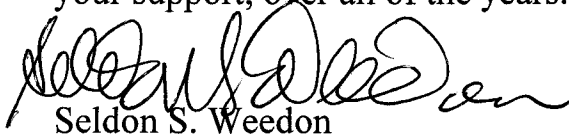
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local firefighters. The local Chief attributes the FSTS training for keeping their firefighters safe and enabling them to save all the homes. The fire did not become a "project fire."

In Plentywood and Clyde Park, local officials report \$200,000 annual insurance premium savings from commercial property and \$1800 average savings per mobile home as a result of the work done by FSTS. These are just a few among many examples of impacts made by FSTS in partnership with local fire fighters in the recent past, made possible by the past and present members of this sub-committee.

Our agency's work saves lives and saves the state taxpayers money. How much we are able to accomplish depends primarily on you, the members of this committee. I thank you, on behalf of our firefighters for your support, over all of the years.



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Director

Fire Services Training School

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